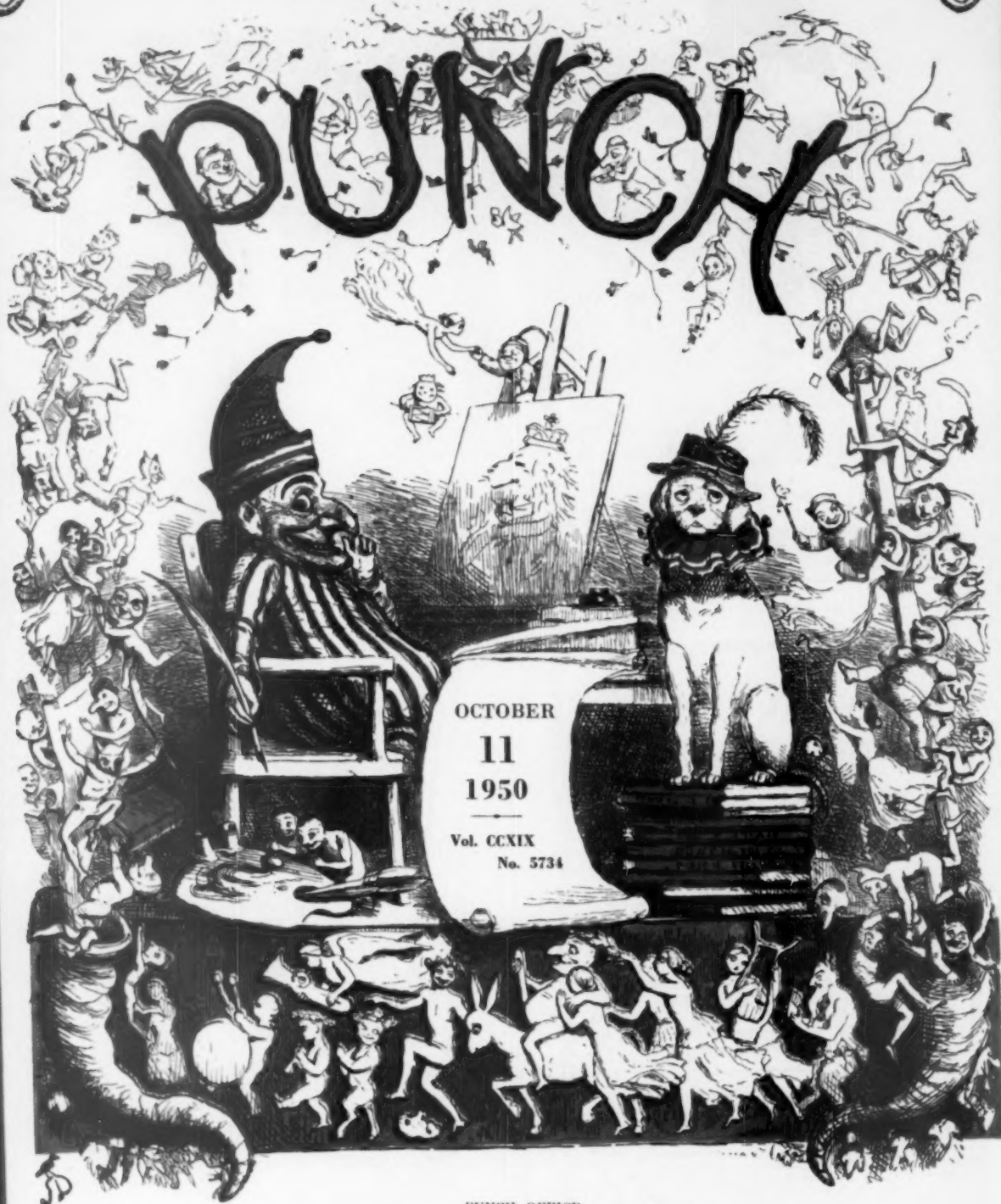


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PUNCH OR THE LONDON CHARTER—WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11 1950

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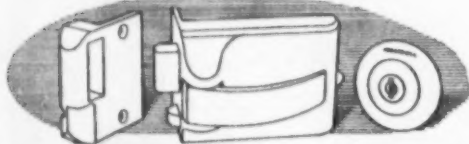


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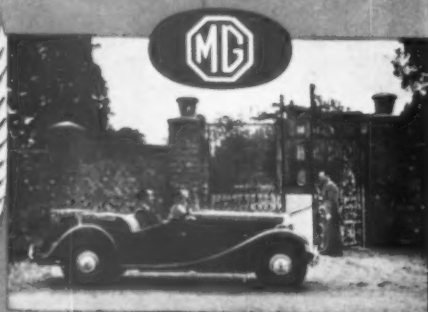
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THOUGH its name be clumsy yet is there risen a good and subtle thing in this England. "Rural bias" it is called—a device whereby some worthy educational authorities are seeking to broaden the minds of their charges. For if England's cities are become important, she cannot live by them alone. And is not the little motor car beneficent in the same degree, in that it frees the people to go about their lovely heritage, to learn again an understanding of the country life? For in such measure as we become farm and country conscious is our contact with the past maintained and the strength of England renewed. And if this gentle schooling weary you, is there not a Bass or Worthington at the nearest halt—old fashioned, old English, and, in turn, devised for the renewing of our England's strength.

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The old Abbot, unaware that his guest was the King, welcomed him as any traveller—set him before a roaring fire and plied him with plates of beef and tankards of ale. King Henry ate with gusto. He drank with distinction. The Abbot, who had a weak stomach was lost in admiration.

"I would give a hundred pounds," he sighed, "to feed as heartily on beef as you."

Next morning the King left. Two weeks later the Abbot was arrested and taken to the Tower of London. For three days he starved. On the fourth he was served with a huge roast of beef. Hungrily he

attacked the meat. Greedily he devoured it. Whereupon the door to his cell burst open.

"It will cost you one hundred pounds for your freedom," said Henry VIII.

• • •

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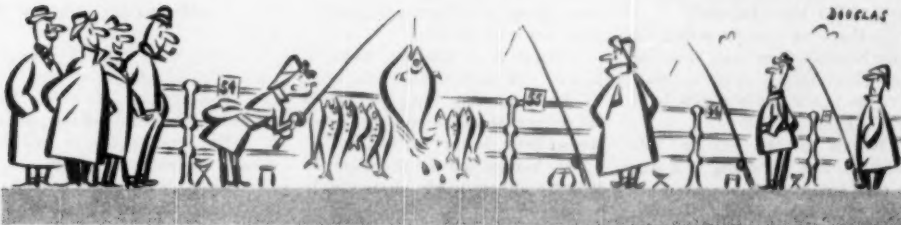


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AUTUMN

AUTUMN, the crowning glory of the year,
Is pure refreshment for the jaded soul;
When Ceres waves her ripe and golden ear,
And brother squirrel, like a profiteer,
Piles up the nuts in his hibernal hole;

When Boreas occasionally blows,
To show what villainies he has in store;
When in her final glory blooms the rose,
And greenfly wags his predatory nose
About her budding infancy no more;

When flaring sunset spreads a golden haze
Across the stubble and the auburn trees,
And brother swallow climbs his airy maze
To tread his trackless and mysterious ways
To Tarbes and Susa and the Cyclades.

Now runs the blood less fiery in the veins,
And vernal blotches vanish from the nape;
Now youth and ancient, flinging off the chains
Of high romance and low rheumatic pains,
Turn to the greater glory of the grape;

Now evening with his sharp and welcome tang
Summons the mothballed blankets from the chest;
Now dawns the Session with its Sturm und Drang,
And brother Statesman hews his new harangue
Into the likeness of a palimpsest.

For Autumn reigns, and Winter waits beyond;
And many a jocund month before us lies,
Ere Spring shall crawl, bedraggled, from a pond
To herald, with a flourish of her wand,
The Summer's thunder and his store of flies.

R. P. LISTER



A COCKLE IS A COCKLE

I DON'T think I'm fussy about clothes, but Patricia said that she didn't like cockles.

"Don't come back here with a sports coat with a cockle in it like the last one you bought," she said.

At first the proprietor of the shop was quite sympathetic about the cockles. "Yes, yes, perhaps it does stand out a little," he had said smoothly, reaching for another jacket. "Try this one, sir."

By the time I had reached the fifteenth jacket there was, however, a perceptible change in his manner.

"This one's got a cockle in it too," I said.

"Where is the cockle this time?" he said, clutching at a display case for support.

"In the same place," I said.

"There is a distinct cockle just at the top of the right lapel."

"I cannot see any cockle," he said heavily.

"Yes, yes, a definite cockle," I cried. "I think all your jackets must be cut with cockles."

He handed me the sixteenth jacket.

"You see," I said triumphantly. "This one has a cockle, too, in the same place. I told you your jackets were cut with cockles."

"That is a different make of jacket," he said, closing his eyes. "I doubt whether the great cockle conspiracy of which you speak has spread from factory to factory."

He handed me the seventeenth. It had another cockle. I showed it to him.

"Another cockle," I said. "A little lower down this time."

"I must write to the makers," he said in a voice that was accompanied by a queer whistling noise, "and tell them to put the cockle in a little higher up. It will never do if they start putting the cockles in the wrong place. Try this one on for cockles."

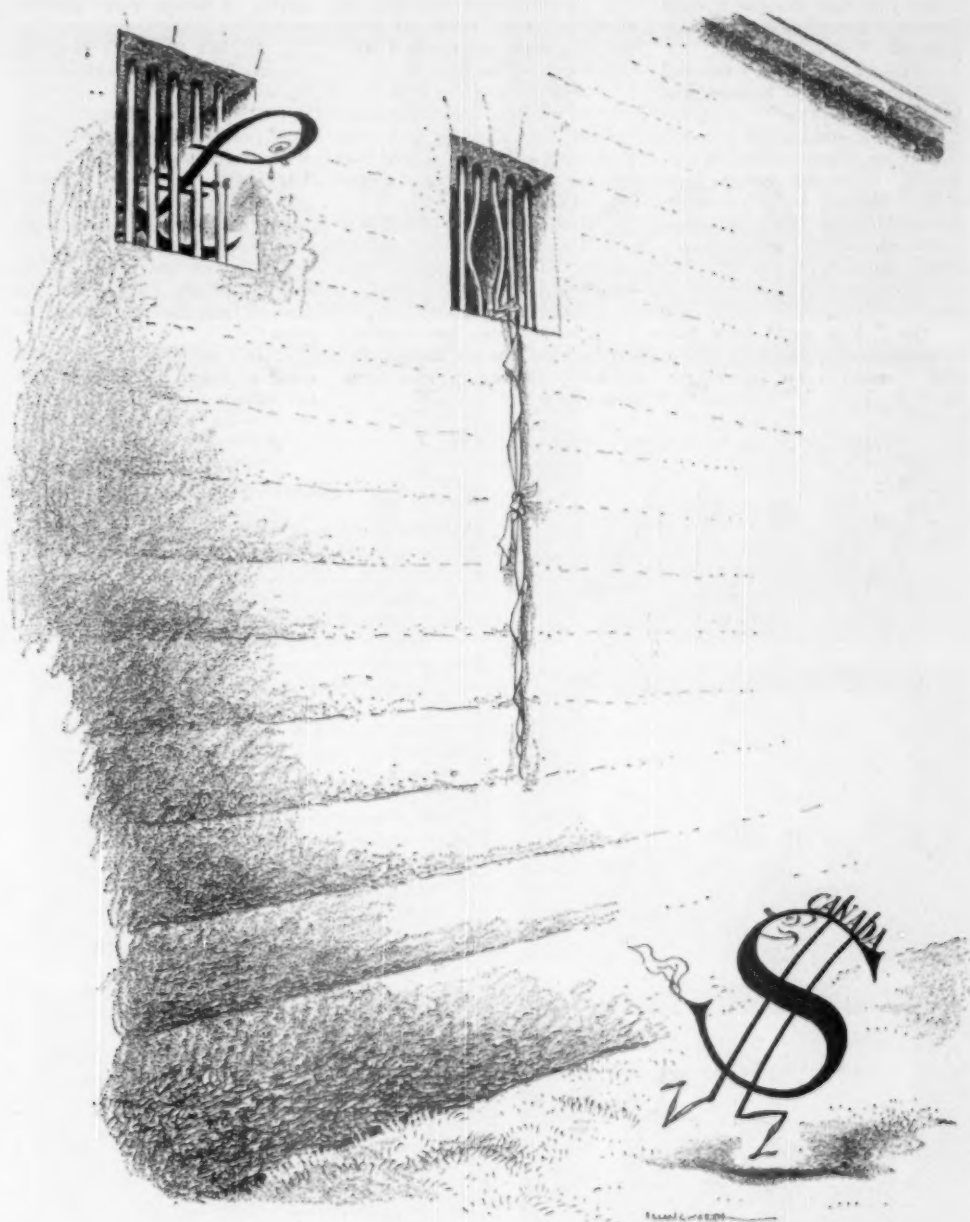
I tried on the eighteenth jacket. He stared moodily out of the door.

"Another cockle, I presume," he said without looking at me.

"Well, yes," I admitted. "It is a cockle. You could call it a pucker." "But you prefer to call it a cockle, no doubt?"

"Well, a cockle is a cockle."

"Once a cockle always a



JAIL-BREAK

cockle," he agreed. "The trouble is that your right shoulder is lower than your left shoulder. That is where the cockles come from."

"Here, I say, there's no need to call me deformed because your jackets have cockles."

"There's nothing like a cockle for showing up deformities," he continued. "I suggest you go to a tailor. He will make you some deformed clothes which will only cockle when they are worn by normal people."

"You can't sell me a jacket, then?"

"No. You would be a bad advertisement for my shop if you walked round town covered in cockles."

"How about a pullover?"

"I would like to oblige you, but all my pullovers stretch. After one has worn them for about a week they cockle at the knees."

"Well, I would like a tie."

"All my ties," he said proudly, "are shoddy. They are such awkward shapes that no matter how they are tied they cockle in a most hideous fashion."

"Sock suspenders?" I inquired.

"My sock suspenders give people varicose veins and a nasty itchy skin disease," he said.

"They don't cockle!"

"They do if one has one's calf on the front of one's leg instead of at the back," he said, glancing down at my legs.

"Well, you have some 'Express' shirts. I always wear 'Express' shirts."

"Ah, but you don't know my 'Express' shirts," he said, shaking his head.

"They cockle?" I said.

"Yes, and they strangle people. With every 'Express' shirt I get in I take out a third party insurance policy. My customers die like flies."

I now realized he did not want my custom. I told him so.

"How can you say that!" he said. "Didn't I show you one hundred and twenty-eight sports coats?"

I still haven't got my sports coat. I haven't got the courage to tell Patricia that I'm deformed.

6 6

SAND-EELING

WHEN the full moon brought the September springs,
And before midnight all the bay was bare,
We dug for sand-eels in the sludgy wastes
Of coarse sand unacquainted with the air.
In the blanched miracle of a moon-drained world
We hunted them in couples half the night
With innocent kisses, sandy hands fast held,
Laughter and lantern-light.

The moon had sucked the sea into its source.
Sea-bleached and strange the monstrous molluscs
clung
To the gaunt bastions of tremendous rocks
Where slimy swathes of heavy seaweed hung.
Beneath the pebbled beach the level sands
Threw back the moonlight in a luminous glow:
The full moon burned fantastically bright
Twenty-five years ago.

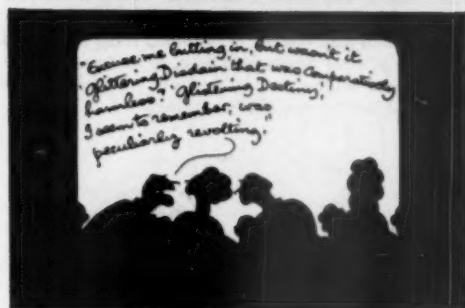
There was no wind at all. The turning tide
Came in like cream across the shining waste
Under the breathless air, and lapped our feet
Chuckling and swift and cold. We fled in haste,
And doused our lanterns, and compared our catch;
And as the whispering flood crept up the beach
We lit great fires of drift-wood and dry wrack
Beyond its farthest reach.

We bathed at dawn. The ink-dark sea was cold,
The cold air incommunicably sweet.
The pale, drowned flames of phosphorescent fire
Swirled up like dust under our threshing feet.
The last red embers faded as the skies
Kindled and caught. The summer night was done.
Sea-drunk, enchanted, scarcely of the world,
We waited for the sun.



Gals

EVENING'S ENJOYMENT



Jaggers

LIFEMANSHIP

II. CONVERSATIONSHIP

Now we get down to Lifemanship Basic. Read through quickly for the general sense, and then back to the beginning you go, to memorize each individual gambit. It is not easy, but if you work hard you will all be as happy as sandboys.

IN conversation play the important thing is to get in early and stay there. There are always some slow or feeble-witted people in any conversation group who will turn their heads towards the man who gets going first. Any good average Lifeman should be able to succeed here. A simple method is to ask a question and answer it almost immediately yourself, after one person has said "Oh"—or "Well." e.g.:

LIFEMAN. I wonder what the expectation of life of, say, an advertising agent of thirty really is—at this moment of time, I mean.

Having read up the answer to this question* in *Whitaker's Almanack* just before coming into the room, Lifeman, after only a second's pause, can answer his own question.

Another opening, more difficult to guard against, is the encouraging personal remark aimed at your chief rival, e.g. "Good lord, how do you always manage to look so well?" There are many variants. "I'm glad to see you looking so fit" can suggest that at last your friend has cut down to a bottle of whisky a day. More subtle, and more difficult to answer is:

LIFEMAN. You're looking wonderfully relaxed.

I have noted J. Pinson's reply (known as "Pinson's Reply") to this clever gambit:

LIFEMAN. You're looking wonderfully relaxed. . . . I thought something good had happened to you.

PINSON. You're looking tremendously relaxed too.

LIFEMAN (counter-riposting). Ah, but I'm not looking nearly so relaxed as you are.

PINSON. Oh, I don't think I'm very relaxed.

LIFEMAN. Oh, yes, you are.

Two Lifemen may go on in this way for twenty minutes, but to a layman the statement that he is relaxed, if left unchallenged, can suggest that normally he is nervy and abstracted, if not on the verge of a breakdown.

* * *

Glaciation

This is the name for the set of gambits which are designed to induce an awkward silence, or at any rate

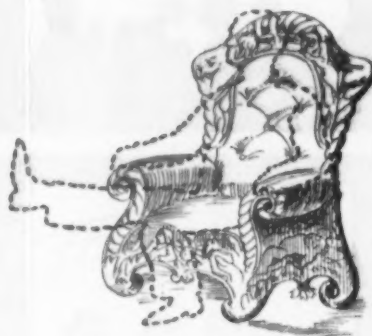
* But remember that each gambit has its answer or counter-life. Do not be downed by the difficulty of Lifeman's question, but answer back with a will before he has had time to answer himself. Thus:

COUNTERLIFE. (i) I should have thought that question had lost all validity in our contemporary context or (ii) I wondered how long it would be before somebody asked that question.

a disinclination to talk, on the part of possible opponents. The "freezing" effects of these gambits is sometimes of immense power, and I list them here in order of strength, placing the weakest first:

(a) Tell a funny story (not advised).

(b) If someone else tells a funny story, do not, whatever happens, tell your own funny story in reply, but listen intently and not only refrain from laughing or smiling, but make no response, change of expression or movement whatever. The teller of the funny story, whatever the nature of his joke, will then suddenly feel that what he has said is in bad taste. Press home your advantage. If he is a stranger, and has told a story about a man with one leg, it is no bad thing to pretend that one of your own legs is false, or at any rate that you have a severe limp. This will certainly silence Opponent for the rest of the evening.



POSITION FOR FALSE LEG PLAY

The "day dream" easy chair

(c) "Spenserian Stunser"—this is the facetious name for Quotationship. The nickname probably arose because the quotation of two or three lines of a stanza from Spenser's "Faery Queen" is probably as good an all-round silencer as anything.*

* It is best for beginners to stick to Spenser. Students who wish to experiment should beware of pitfalls. In general, the older and more classic the quotations the more depressing the effect; but they should not be too well known, or they may be taken for a joke. It's no good just saying "The play's the thing," for instance, whenever the conversation changes to the subject of a play. And do not, if somebody mentions Italy and Florence, quote Browning: "Florence lay out on the mountain side," for this may merely raise an easy laugh—the last thing you want to do.

No, let your quotation be apt and obviously classic. If

(d) **Languageing up.** To "language up" an opponent is, according to Symes' *Dictionary of Lifemanship and Gamewords*, "to confuse, irritate and depress by the use of foreign words, fictitious or otherwise, either singly or in groups."



REMOVAL OF ORDINARY FLOWER-POT

Counter-Gesticulation Play

The standard and still the best method is the gradual. If the subject is the relative methods of various orchestral conductors, for instance, say something early on about the "brie" of Boult. Three minutes later contrast the "fuldenbienen" of Kubelik, and the firm "*austag, austag*" of his beat "which Brahms would have delighted in."

A general uneasiness should now be developing and the Lifeman may well feel he has done enough. But for Advanced Languaging I recommend the Macintosh Finisher, invented by H. Macintosh, the tea planter. During one of the lengthening pauses he will quote one of seventeen genuine *Ballades* in Mediaeval French

someone shows signs of capturing attention and admiration by travelmanship, for instance, he can be undermined thus:

TRAVELLER. I'm just back from Florence, too. Where did you stay?

LAYGIBEL. An excellent little hotel, recommended by Cook's. Quite cheap. Near the station. Pensione Inglese. It was quite nice. Do you know it?

TRAVELLER. Well—I never stay in Florence . . . too noisy . . . but Cyril Waterford lets me use his rambling old castle just beyond Fiesole. Very haunted, very beautiful, five ancient retainers—and fun.

LIFEMAN. Ah—"Give me a castle, precipice encurled, in a gap of the wind-grieved Apennines."

Traveller who has been scoring all along the line, against the Laygirl made to feel awkward about her wretched English-speaking Pension, finds himself entombed in the wave of silence which follows this.

which he has learnt by heart. "Of course, you know this," he begins. . . .

"Ah, vieille septence du melange" and so on, with reverberating accents on the silent "e." After two of these half his audience will be completely silent for fifteen minutes and the rest may actually have gone.

There is a rare counter to this which I have heard once, brilliantly used with wonderful effect by H. Meynell, son of F. Meynell the Gamesman, when he was a mere lad of eighteen. This is to tell, *as if to brighten the atmosphere*, a funny story in French. If I had to choose an example of brilliance in Lifemanship it would, I think, be this. For as a cover to any lack of knowledge of the language or the accent, he told it, or made as if to tell it. "in a strong dialect."

"Il a répondu 'Favoori,' in the Toulouse drawl."
I have never been able to discover whether this was a genuine Toulouse accent or not, nor, indeed, whether B. Meynell can speak any genuine French at all.

(e) If the Lifeman is a late-comer and the conversation is already well-established, a different gambit-sequence altogether must, of course, be used. In order to *stop the flow* he must judge the *source of eloquence* and deflect the current into a *new channel* by *damming the stream*.*

If, for instance, someone is being really funny or witty and there is a really pleasant atmosphere of hearty and explosive laughter, then (a) join in the laughter at first. Next (b) gradually become silent. Finally (c) at some pause in the conversation be overheard saying "Oh for some real talk."

Alternatively, if there is genuinely good conversation and argument listen silently with exaggerated solemnity and then whisper to your neighbours "I'm sorry but I've got a hopeless and idiotic desire to be a little bit silly."

I strongly recommend this last phrase, which indeed might be dignified as a Gambit, though it is usually regarded as a ploy of Lowbrowmanship, which we may discuss under the even more main heading of Writership and Critic Play.

But never forget the uses of Lowbrowmanship in conversation and the phrases "Oh, I don't know" and "I'm awfully sorry."

LAYMAN. I don't advise the new musical. It's certainly a leg show, but the harmonies are trite, the dialogue is unfunny and the *décor* is just a splurge.

LOWBROWMAN. Oh, I don't know, I rather like a good bit of old-fashioned vulgarity. And I'm awfully sorry but I like leg shows. STEPHEN POTTER

(To be continued)

* There is a *physical* method of making the too-eloquent and successful speaker self-conscious and causing him, in the end, to break down. In brief the ploy is:

1. To watch not the man but his gestures—his moving hands.

2. To alter the position of some flower-pot, suggesting by your way of doing it (a) that some movement of his hand may be going to knock it over; (b) that these gestures are a queer, somewhat Latin business, a little out of place to our English way of thinking.

TABLES

SOME houses are rich in one thing, some in another. Some have enough shelves for all the books to stand on; some have enough comfortable chairs for all the guests to sit in. I remember one house (it was a cottage actually, and how I liked it) where you could make yourself a cup of tea in any room in which you happened to find yourself. Our house, if it is rich in anything, is rich in tables. As a family we are not eaters off trays in the lap or writers off pads on the knee. If we fancy doing a job we like a firm surface under us.

The kitchen table, to begin with. Some people do without a kitchen table. I find this horrible. To me life without a kitchen table is one of the most godless forms of life. The kitchen table, like the hearth, is one of the focal points of the house. If there are any Lares and Penates in the world some of them at least must hover round the kitchen table. Where else can they hover if they are superintending a last-minute pressing of trousers, or a stolen sink-down beside the fashion-page, or a getting of flour on the nose? Do they hover round something topped with white enamel or a stolen chromium surface of a kitchen-unit? Not they. Mind you, I'll be honest with you. I have always wanted one of those units. I never see a picture of one standing in all its perfect length along a kitchen wall, and sometimes even taking the corner in its stride and continuing along the next wall, without having my heart turn over in a little pang of longing. I sometimes dream of standing on those lovely tiles (the units always stand on tiles) and doing my washing-up and my washing and my wringing and disposing of my tea-leaves with everything as it were coming up under the hand or foot it is required under and me practising the most perfect economy of movement and not showing the faintest sign of industrial fatigue. I sometimes think of it as I plod backwards and forwards to the dresser or struggle to replace on its high shelf in the scullery (for

I am a little woman) the venerable and encrusted black stewpot in which we make our stews. But swap such a unit, however gleaming, for my kitchen table! Never while blood runs in these veins or sand in the egg-boiler that hangs beside the stove.

Our kitchen table is of respectable area, about five-foot by three-foot-six and has a respectably-scrubbed top and in repose is covered by a red or blue check cloth. In my heart I would prefer it to be covered with the traditional cloth with bobbles—I have inherited a similar cloth in green plush with fringes, and I have often thought of dedicating it to our kitchen table, but the pile is long and I am always restrained by the thought of extricating the marmalade from it.

Life is lived round our kitchen table enormously, especially in these servantless days. I can remember the times (forgive me if I sound boastful) when life was not lived by us round the kitchen table at all. The kitchen table belonged to Mrs. Chipping. The youngest member of our family, who had not yet learned what fear was, used sometimes to approach it and get either a clip on the ear or a bit of pastry to play with, according to the quarter the wind was in, but, except at scheduled times, we kept away. Now I am queen in my own kitchen, and I would far rather rule without my vacuum-cleaner or my refrigerator or any other of the insignia of progress and enlightenment than without my kitchen table.

Oddly enough, life is lived most intensely round it in the middle of the night. People come in and we talk and the fire burns low and they make motions to stir but do not stir, and we creep down at last trying not to wake the rest of the household and I say as we pass the kitchen door "Just let's make a cup of tea. I've got some rather good tea." They follow me in. There is something conspiratorial about it; in a moment we are seated round the board, and then all that

was withheld in the dining-room or in the drawing-room, all that was unparlourable in the parlour or unprintable in the library comes out. What freedom! What wisdom! What wit! What is there that we cannot say, with our elbows on the red or blue checks? Where should I be, where would that sympathy, that knowledge of life, that humorous breadth of vision for which I am famous be, if it had been my habit to chop parsley or roll sausage-rolls on one of those soulless white enamel-tops?

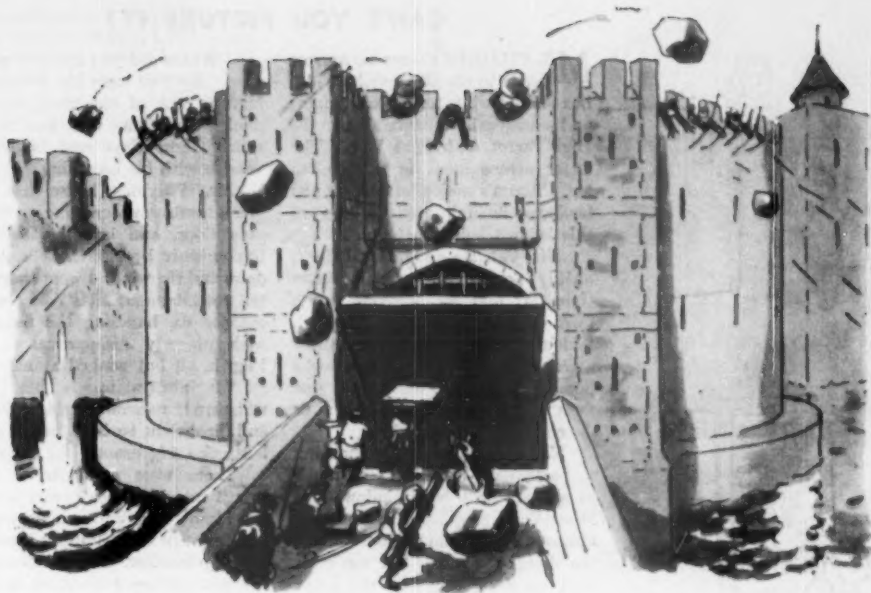
Tables. I was going to write something about tables. I was going to write about the dining-room table and the nursery table and the rather darling little long low table we have in the sitting-room which enables us to have tea by the fire with much less falling over the feet than is generally the rule. I was going to write something about the unspeakableness of trolleys and the treachery of gate-legs. But the kitchen table has detained me.

BACK ROOM JOYS

NEW TOOTHPASTE TUBES

FEW of us waste
Toothpaste;
We roll the tube up from the
bottom
And squeeze out the last atom—
Unless it happens to burst
First,
When for as long as we can abide
We ooze it out at the side.
The messiness of this operation
Increases the jubilation
With which we greet
The new, the slick, the shining, the
fatly replete
Fresh tube, the weighty, uncreased.
For three days at least
Joy follows
While we press only smooth-
shouldered hollows
In the plump obesity of its sleekness.
But with the first inking
Of wrinkling
We abandon this meekness
And, ruthlessly squeezing,
Render the thing rapidly unpleasing.

JUSTIN RICHARDSON



Plus ça change...



Plus c'est la même chose

CAN'T YOU PICTURE IT?

MR. PILGRIM shares his narrow house in the Close with an old, box-shaped white terrier called Sam; and he shares his antique shop in the High Street with Miss Vale. The latter arrangement is uneven, as Mr. Pilgrim's attitude towards the business he inherited is one of thistledown light-heartedness.

Miss Vale is a middle-aged, dark, untidy person who seldom takes time off; and Mr. Pilgrim, bony, fawn-coloured and absent of mind, seldom takes time on. About twice a year he will carry the shop's books home with him to check, but one feels that he probably uses them as door-stops until reminded.

The shop dates back to nothing in particular—there isn't so much as a beam or a bow window—but Miss Vale supplies any missing atmosphere by being intense about the things she sells. She can even work up something over the horse brasses, and when it comes to two or three costly, swollen black pieces of furniture which seem to have bogged down for life she becomes almost psychic as she paints Tudor scenes on the empty air.

"Can't you picture it?" she always demands.

Her employer is a severe trial to her, yet she would be lost without him, because in his maddening way, and without half trying, Mr. Pilgrim picks up the most brilliant bargains in unlikely places.

"I thought you'd like this," he'll say, setting it down on her desk and losing interest in it immediately. Miss Vale strokes the object and awe comes into her eyes.

"Where did you get it?" she'll gasp. By this time Mr. Pilgrim is halfway out of the shop, accompanied by Sam, who has to go slowly these days and has some trouble with his breathing.

Mr. Pilgrim's house has old green tombstones growing up to its very door, and is full of silence broken only by church bells, jackdaws and the wind. I went there for tea not long ago; Miss Vale poured out for us, handling the tea-cosy with gingerly disapproval. Mr. Pilgrim all but winked at me.

"It always upsets her," he whispered, re-arranging the dusty and incoherent curls of the old full-bottomed wig around the teapot.

There were many other odd things in odd places in his house, and I know Miss Vale was longing to seize most of them and put them in her shop window. I know, too, that our antiquarian authorities would have been warmly, if not suspiciously, interested to find out how Mr. Pilgrim was in a position to use a very local-looking stone cherub's winged head as a paper-weight, and an almost unblemished Roman-British pottery vase, topped with a Woolworth saucer, as a tobacco jar. I asked him myself, but he said vaguely that he had "just come across them."

After tea, to amuse Sam and me, Mr. Pilgrim performed some innocently transparent tricks with an ancient jack-in-the-box, six Chinese ivory balls and a large, cracked, yellow fan. Sam, silver-bristled muzzle pursed up in half-doubtful enjoyment, let out brief, round



Cedric Rogers



barks and made a few earthbound skips on his stiff legs; and I began to wonder whether I should be going.

"He'll make me cry one of these days," Miss Vale confided in me as we walked away together. "Did you see that lovely tapestry in the kitchen?"

The shop continued to do well. Miss Vale really was awfully good with American tourists, and got rid of one of the bulbous black pieces as well as countless smaller things. And Mr. Pilgrim continued, erratically and carelessly, to supply the shop with all its star turns.

"I'll never have his knack," Miss Vale admitted wistfully to me one day. "Look at this doll's house. It should be in a museum. If only I could find something like that, just to show him!"

Only four days later she did show him. As I passed the shop she beckoned me in. She was excited and proud, and even Mr. Pilgrim was roused. There, newly delivered, was one of the starriest turns of all—slightly pathetic, but infinitely desirable.

It was a baby's carriage of great age, shell-shaped, and much carved, with little wooden wheels, faded green upholstery and curly shafts for nannie or nanny goat.

It was Mr. Pilgrim's turn to ask "Where *did* you get it?"—and I was glad. He walked around it, patted it, and looked at the blushing Miss Vale with real respect.

"Just the sort of thing we want," he told her approvingly.

That evening, as the sun was setting, I passed the shop again. The door was open, so I looked in.

"Why, Miss Vale!" I exclaimed, for she was bathed not only in pink light but in tears. She pointed wordlessly through the door.

Squinting against the sunset, I could just make out Mr. Pilgrim and Sam heading up the hill for home at a smart pace. Sam was riding in a baby-carriage.

"MOSCOW STIRRING THE KURDS"
"Manchester Guardian"

But why?



"Sorry, sir—closed . . ."

SHIELD

UNDER the fragile, tender curve of sky
Wind-lulled they walk, companioned by content,
And all the sweet delights of summer lie
Still warm upon them now that summer's spent.

The children wander in a world of dreams,
In squirrels' byways; they are for ever a part
Of secret spinneys and little singing streams . . .
For ever their clear voices pluck the heart.

Theirs is a world complete, robust, unscarred,
Springing with fountains of song and meadow flowers,
With swift enchantment strown; a world not marred
By any shadow on the sunlit hours.

We see them step bird-light beneath the trees
And, pierced by love, perceive that ever after
We who would lap and fold them round with peace
Can give alone courage, and faith, and laughter.

M. E. R.

Brief Encounters,



CINEMA SKETCHBOOK

FESTIVAL

A CERTAIN coldness towards the 1951 Festival of Britain on the part of a group of much-too-widely-read London newspapers has not affected our enthusiasm for it in Muntun Parva. As Brigadier Hogg remarked at the inaugural meeting of the Muntun Parva Festival Celebration Organization Committee, it is useless deferring the Festival until better times come along, because for all we know our great-great-grandchildren may not care for festivals at all.

"Also," he concluded, "it will be a grand chance to put Muntun Parva on the map. If we can arrange a week of really top-class events we shall attract dollar tourists in their thousands. Our first task is to fix the date."

Johnson-Clitheroe said that it would not be fair to clash with Derby week or Ascot week or Wimbledon, as these were regular annual fixtures and ought not to have their chance spoiled.

The vicar said he would be back from his holidays at the end of August and that he thought the first week in September would be the best.

"And as we always have the garden party in aid of the Steeple Upkeep fund on the first Saturday in September," he suggested, "we can make that the opening event of the Festival. Americans are frightfully keen on old churches, and a judicious letter to *The Times* about our death-watch beetles in the previous week would bring them along in coach-loads."

Entwistle, who is treasurer of our cricket club, said that by fixing our annual two-day match with Bottle Green for the Monday and Tuesday and playing in top hats and calling it a centenary match we might get something about it in the national Press, and perhaps be able to re-roof the pavilion as the result of a really bumper collection on the ground.

Miss Terse of the Nimblehop School of Dancing undertook to fill Wednesday with displays of Sussex Folk Dances, concluding with a Pageant of All Nations except

Russia. Though, of course, she added, it might have blown over by then, and in that case she still had the Coasack costumes that had made such a hit on VE Day.

With the Scouts and Guides guaranteeing a show for Thursday and the Tuesday Afternoon Women's Guild gallantly offering to break new ground with a Bumper Whist Drive and Dance on Friday we felt that our skeleton programme showed considerable promise. Doubts about the adequacy of accommodation for resident visitors were set at rest when Mrs. Frill of the Muntun Arms said that she thought that by de-blackening the skylight of the lumber attic she could provide a second guest-room. A

sub-committee was formed to approach the Muntun-on-Sea bus company with a view to persuading them to run a bus to Muntun Parva every day during Festival Week instead of only on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

Only one item aroused controversy. Brigadier Hogg said that Montgomery or some other military figure (meaning himself) should perform the opening ceremony. Councillor Sympson thought that Churchill or some other eminent politician (meaning himself) should do the job. Personally, I felt that a literary giant like Bernard Shaw should be approached. If he refused, I urged, we could always fall back on local talent. D. H. BARBER



BOOKING OFFICE

The Twilight of the Monasteries

THE completion of G. G. Coulton's *Five Centuries of Religion* is a major event of historical scholarship. In more favourable circumstances there would have been yet another volume to precede the one now published, but the want of it causes no break in the continuity of the story; and this final instalment, devoted to "The Last Days of Medieval Monachism," lacks nothing but the perfecting touches of which it here and there shows the need. Nor, at nearly ninety, did Coulton show any signs of failing whether in breadth of erudition, vigour of presentation, or integrity of judgment. He has been accused of bias, but it was a passion for truth that made him the ruthless critic of those whom he believed to have pictured the religious life of the Middle Ages in too unclouded a light. If he insists on scandal and disorder, he does full justice to those who strove by revival or reform to obviate the catastrophe that some of them foresaw.

F. B.

A Tale from Old Vienna

The son of Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria took his own life sixty years ago under circumstances of romance, despair and horror that have been the foundation for countless subsequent legends. In *Rudolf—The Tragedy of Mayerling* Count Carl Lonyay, offering still one more authentic version of the melodrama, mercilessly criticizes the Habsburgs and all their works and ways. The prince, a dissolute, weak-kneed drug-addict whose only wholesome friend was the tutor who made him, at the age of nine, rewrite with corrected spelling the first of many morbid sentimental



"... and what's more be'll remain in the cellar
until he's in a more repentant frame of mind."

wills, is seen here as a suppressed intellectual harassed by obsolete Court ceremonial, living at the bidding of a monarch with the temper of a tyrant and the qualifications of an office-boy and surrounded by advisers bent only on lining their own pockets before the crumbling empire should fall to pieces. The story swims with wickedness and insanity, with eventual suicide a logical deduction.

C. C. P.

Of Love and War

The late Dan Billany, part-author of "The Cage," left behind him the manuscript of a novel which has been published without revision. Though the names of the characters are fictitious *The Trap* reads like straight autobiography; it is a vivid and moving reminiscence of the last war. The efficient proletarian officer has seldom before been described from the inside. All the army detail, military and psychological, is absorbing. The earlier chapters are concerned with the writer's fiancée and her home, and, at first reading, seemed to occupy too large a share of the book; but when he is drafted to the Western Desert and no letters come from England the aching separation which is the background to the terrors and discomforts of war is rendered with an immediacy that could not have been produced by a mere statement of what had been left behind. It is an angry book and occasionally an inarticulate one; but in it love and war come alive.

H. G. G. P.

The Survivor

The man who keeps spiritual values alive nowadays has a way of looking like something left over from a shipwreck, a stranger clinging to a few uncouth possessions among a community quite content with its own comforts. In this sense Mr. Paul Bloomfield, endowed from childhood with intimations of immortality, is, as he says, "a survivor"; and his *Journal: 1939-1949* the log of a religio-philosophical voyage. The journal began in a shilling notebook and ended when the contents of ten notebooks were distilled and arranged as a record of mainly spiritual perceptions. It is an anthology whose determined course leads to a position outside any Church; the diarist side-stepping the Almighty's historic claim to public worship, but quite at home when all that is left of the rite is an atmosphere of liturgy. He is always stimulating company, however; and such feats as a translation of Pascal in terms of Whitehead show the length and breadth of his sympathies.

H. F. E.

Books Reviewed Above

Five Centuries of Religion, Vol. IV: The Last Days of Medieval Monachism. G. G. Coulton. (Cambridge University Press, 45/-)

Rudolf—The Tragedy of Mayerling. Count Carl Lonyay. (Hamish Hamilton, 15/-)

The Trap. Dan Billany. (Faber, 10/6)

Journal: 1939-1949. Paul Bloomfield. (Gollancz, 12/6)

MOTHER'S OWN

MY mother wrote and said she was glad to hear that I had found a flat to share with Diana. Where was Diana's home? What did she do? Was she a nice girl? Did I like her?

Now, my mother supposed, I had considered everything from every angle, but she was my mother and she thought of things, too. Had I realized that I couldn't be quite as independent sharing a flat as I had been in a room on my own? Suppose Diana didn't do her share of washing-up, what would I do? Suppose Diana wanted the light out when I didn't, what would I do? Suppose we didn't like the same kind of food, what would I do?

I wrote back and said we had thought it all over very carefully before we took the flat. My mother had nothing to worry about. As far as food was concerned, the only thing I couldn't eat was milk pudding, while Diana didn't like olives or kippers.

My mother wrote and said that was all very well. It sounded all right and no doubt I was, as usual, quite certain I knew more about it than anyone else. But I couldn't go through life not eating milk pudding. Milk pudding was most nourishing and was rich in vitamins. My mother knew someone who didn't eat milk pudding and she was as thin as a rake and wore the most extraordinary clothes. That was one thing about my father—he would always eat milk pudding. When she was at her wit's end she always gave him milk pudding. Why didn't Diana like kippers?

There was, however, my mother continued, one good thing about my sharing a flat. She wouldn't have to worry about my being ill. Ever since I left home she had been expecting me to contract pneumonia or break my leg. This would have been terrible when I was living alone. But now it would be different. Was Diana healthy? My mother didn't want me to spend the rest of my life nursing her.

I wrote back and said yes, Diana was healthy. Please was there an old tablecloth at home that I



"Well, this hat is so comfortable I just wouldn't know I had it on."

could have? And two napkins. And two pillow-cases? And two sheets? And two towels?

My mother wrote and said she was horrified. Had I been living all this time without any linen? She remembered once during the war when I was home on leave she had wanted me to take napkins back to camp with me. She had never dared mention it again.

She was sending a parcel off straight away, and I must use them. She knew a girl once who lived by herself in a bed-sitting room, and just hadn't bothered with things like tablecloths. She had become more and more slipshod and no one would have thought her mother was such a nice woman. She was married now with an Airedale. My mother

didn't want that to happen to me.

I wrote back and said that in the rooms I had had before I had been provided with linen.

My mother wrote and said oh well. At least I wouldn't be living cooped up in one room with my head hanging out of the window and my gas-ring practically under my bed. The thing that made her die with laughter was the thought of me with a flat to run! She would be interested to hear how we were managing after two weeks. Just two weeks would be long enough. Not that she expected me to tell her anything, but she would be able to read between the lines all right. Oh, yes.

I'm sure she will, too.

PATIENTS' CHOICE

Complaints have been made recently that in some hospitals the patients are subjected to a continuous loud-speaker performance of the Light Programme.

ALL day the radio has been
Resounding through Ward Seventeen,
From "Housewives' Choice" this morning to
Moonrise and "Rhythm Rendezvous."

At four-fifteen we did not fail
To keep our tryst with "Mrs. Dale,"
And evening brought the doubtful joys
Of Rudy Moody's Rumba Boys.

But nobody switched on the HOME
For "Evensong" (under Paul's dome)
Or dared to say he'd have preferred
The Brahms Concerto on the THIRD. . . .

Had Goethe breathed his last between
The blankets of Ward Seventeen
His final utterance to-night
Would not, I think, have been "More LIGHT!"



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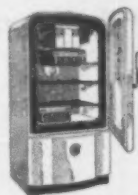
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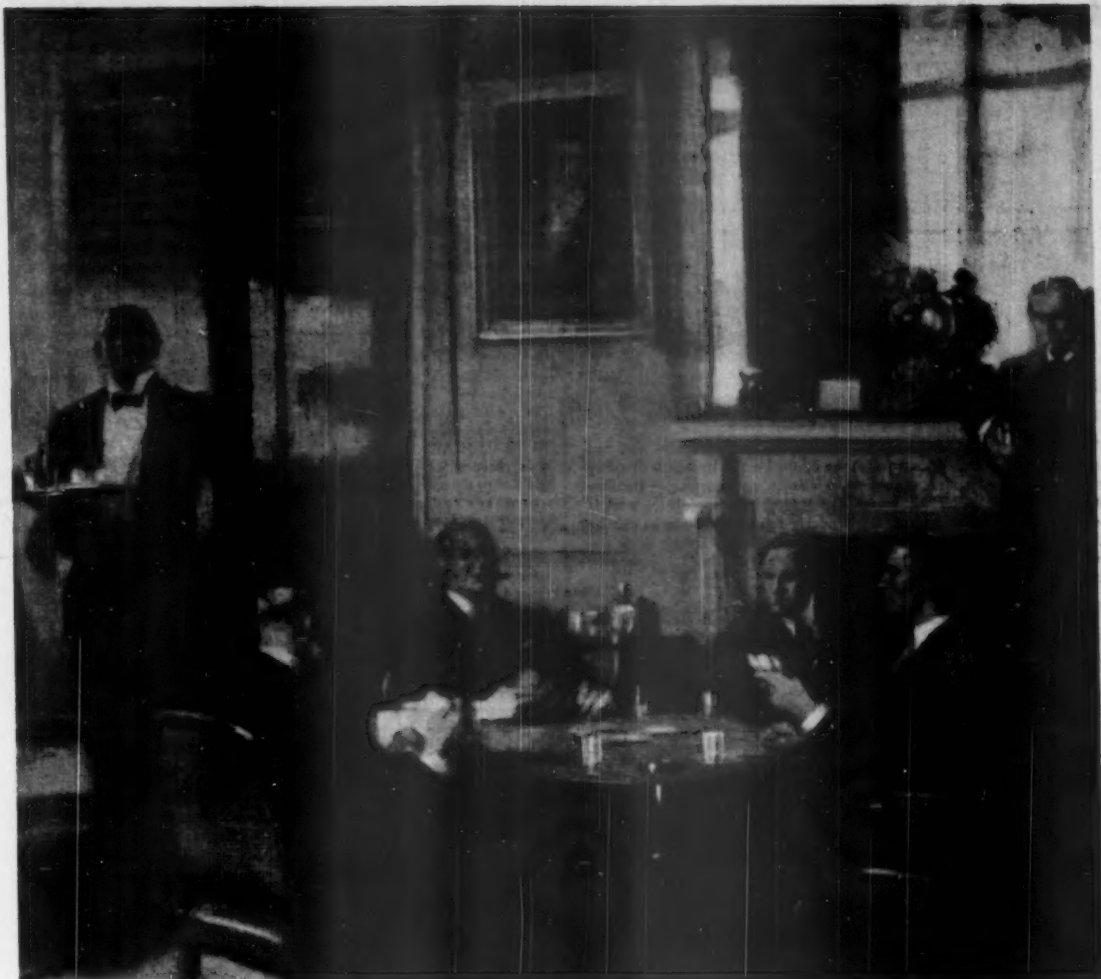


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IN THE PICTURE

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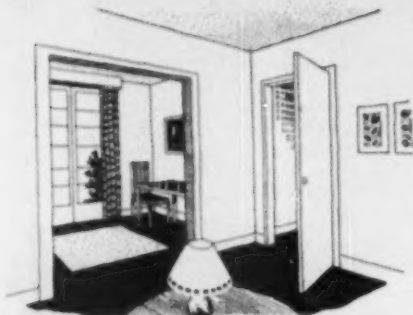
that it comes to him on the very same Georgian salver. He sits in the very same chair. He believes it the business of clubs, friends and drinks to be what they always were. White Horse believes so, too.

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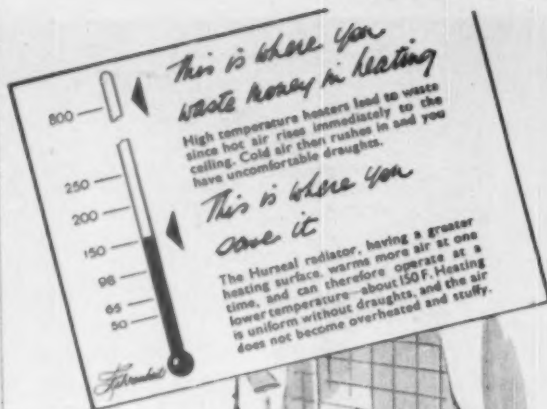
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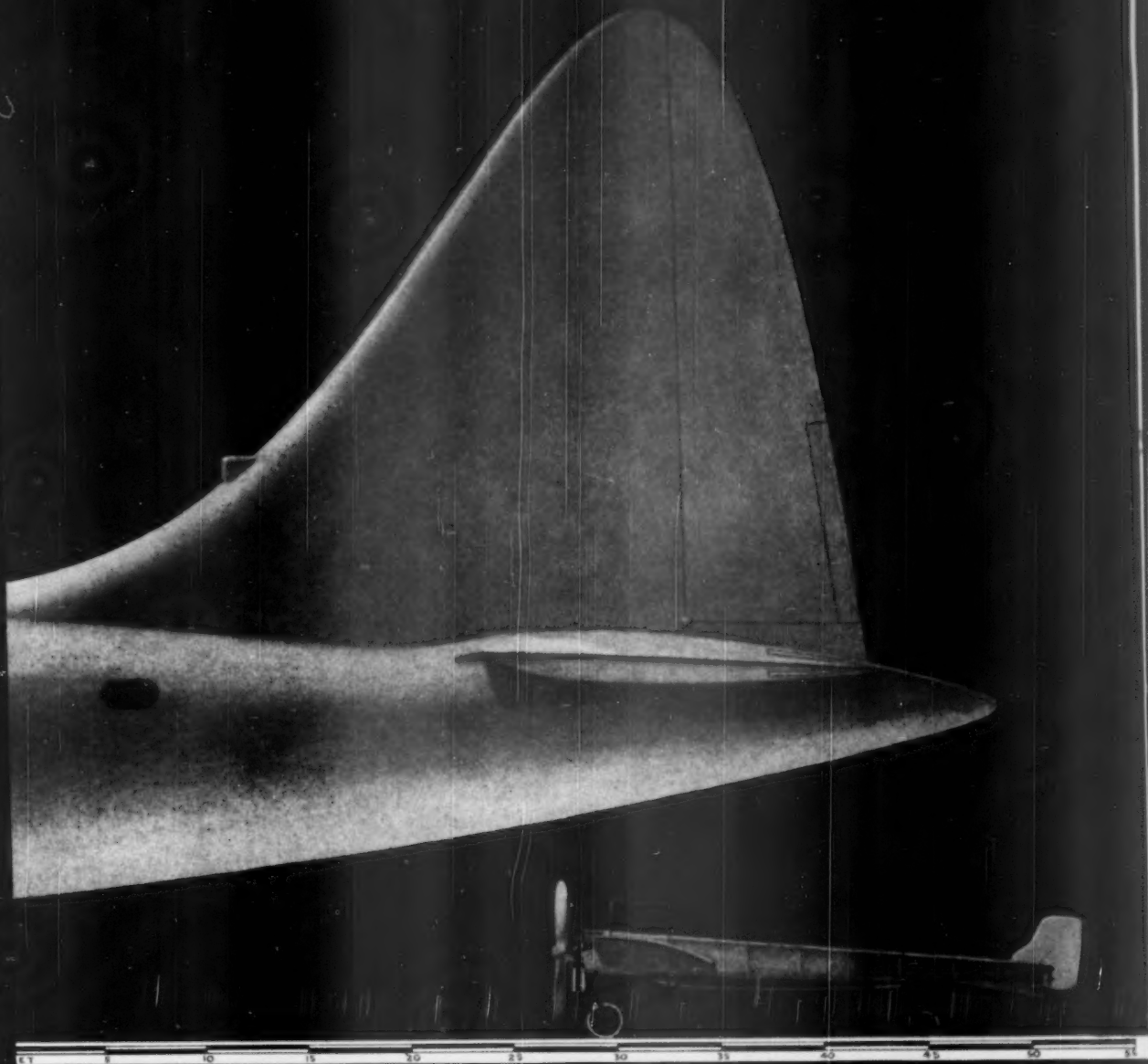
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P.2



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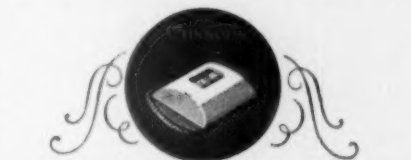
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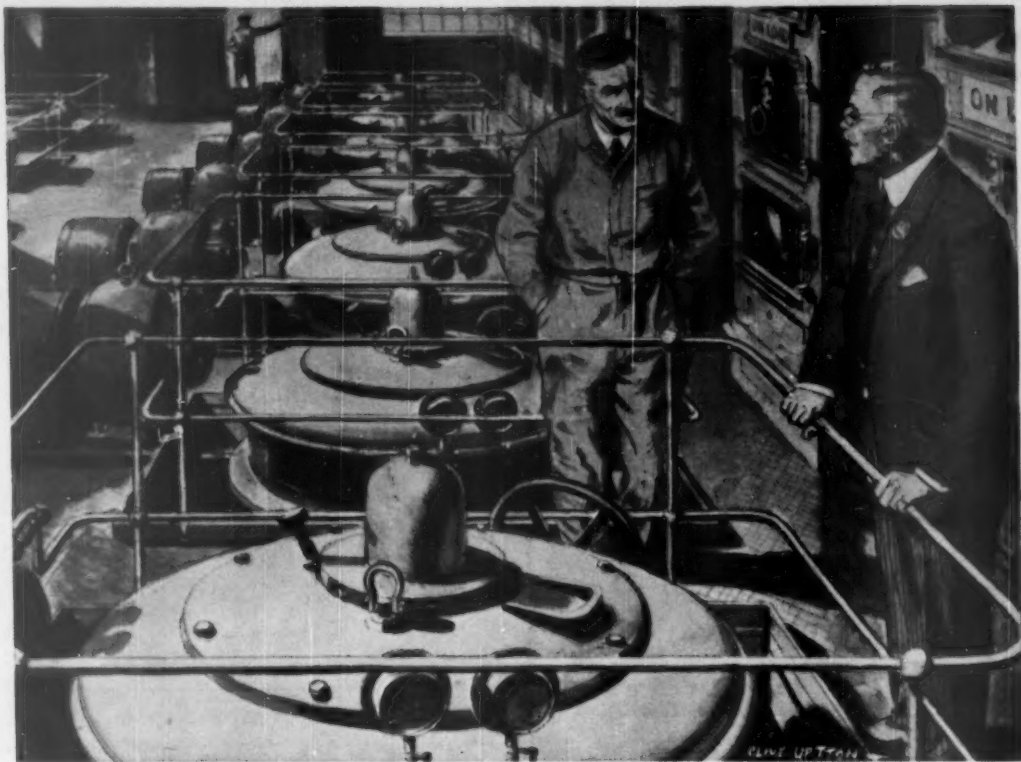
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